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General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

364th meeting

Tuesday, 4 April 2017, 10 a.m.

New York

Chair: Ms. Martinic ..... (Argentina)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

General debate (*continued*)

The Chair (*spoke in Spanish*): This morning the Commission will continue with the list of speakers for the general debate. I would urge those delegations that have not yet done so to inscribe themselves on the list as soon as possible.

In order to maximize the time available to us during the general exchange of views segment, I propose that we maintain the practice of using a rolling list of speakers, which is currently open to all delegations wishing to take the floor. I would also like to remind all delegations that are already inscribed on the list to keep in mind that a rolling list implies that they should be prepared to take the floor at any time, possibly sooner than they had originally planned.

I would also like to remind delegations that we will follow the established format for the length of statements, that is, 15 minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of the groups and 10 minutes when making statements in their national capacity.

Ms. Bebbington (United Kingdom): I would like to start by congratulating you on your chairmanship, Madam Chair, and by assuring you of the full support of the United Kingdom delegation.

The United Kingdom is committed to the long-term goal of a world without nuclear weapons, and we recognize our obligations under all three pillars of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We have a strong record on nuclear disarmament. We have reduced our own nuclear forces by more than half since the height of the Cold War. We hold only around 1 per cent of the global stockpile of nuclear weapons. We initiated the permanent-five process to bring together the nuclear-weapon States in order to build the confidence and transparency needed to help develop the conditions that would enable disarmament. We have led the way on disarmament verification.

We recognize the frustration that exists at the perceived slow progress on nuclear disarmament. However, there are no shortcuts on the road to a world without nuclear weapons. We do not believe the negotiations on a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons will lead to effective progress on nuclear disarmament. The United Kingdom firmly believes that the best way to achieve a world without nuclear weapons is through gradual multilateral disarmament, negotiated using a step-by-step approach and within existing frameworks. Global disarmament requires a step-by-step approach to build trust and confidence. It will provide for tangible steps towards a safer and more stable world where countries with nuclear weapons feel able to relinquish them.

The United Kingdom will continue to press for key steps towards multilateral disarmament, including the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We welcome its ratification by Burma and Swaziland during the past year. We fully support efforts to develop and sustain the verification system for the Treaty.

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The United Kingdom will continue to work for successful negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. The United Kingdom has had a voluntary moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices since 1995. We will work constructively in the high-level expert preparatory group on a fissile-material cut-off treaty, established pursuant to resolution 71/259 — sponsored by Canada — to explore ways to make further progress.

The United Kingdom was pleased to co-sponsor resolution 71/267, on nuclear disarmament verification, sponsored by Norway. We will respond positively to the Secretary-General's call for views to help discussions by the Group of Governmental Experts in 2018 and 2019. We hope we will all take that opportunity. We will continue our work with allies on how we meet the challenges of verification.

The United Kingdom believes that nuclear-weapon-free zones contribute greatly to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and to enhancing regional and international security. We remain committed to signing the Protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone as soon as possible and to the objective of achieving a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

The United Kingdom strongly condemns North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile tests, which are in clear violation of multiple Security Council resolutions and continue to threaten international peace and security. We urge North Korea to re-engage with the international community and to take credible, concrete steps to prioritize the well-being of its own people instead of the illegal pursuit of its nuclear and ballistic-missile programmes. The United Kingdom has engaged directly with North Korea to condemn its actions and continues to engage with a range of partners on appropriate multilateral responses.

The United Kingdom remains absolutely committed to rigorous implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action agreed on between the E3+3 and Iran.

The United Kingdom's contribution to building the conditions for our shared aim of a goal of a world without nuclear weapons is, and will continue to be, strong. We are also concerned about the threat to global security through the illicit proliferation and use of conventional weapons.

The United Kingdom is committed to playing a leading role in international efforts on conventional arms control across the full range of issues and in support of the numerous instruments and arrangements designed to deliver greater global security. We are pleased to act as President of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects in 2017 and as a member of the Committee on Cooperative Compliance under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Transparency in the field of conventional arms is an important endeavour. Our commitment to annual reporting to the Arms Trade Treaty, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions is a testament to that. The universalization of all those instruments would be a substantial step forward in building confidence in the field of conventional arms. We call on all States that are not signatories to, or participating in, such instruments to make ratification or accession a national priority.

The United Kingdom gives priority to the development and operation of the Arms Trade Treaty. What is needed now is delivery against the Treaty's objectives and priorities, particularly understanding and tackling the challenges of universalization and effective implementation. We look forward to furthering that important work at the third Conference of States Parties, to be heldlater this year. We offer Ambassador Korhonen of Finland our full support in his leadership of that process.

We will continue to provide assistance, where possible, to those looking to join and implement the Treaty. This year, the United Kingdom provided £311,000 to the Arms Trade Treaty Voluntary Trust Fund to assist States parties to implement the Treaty. The existing overarching framework of conventional arms control and confidence-building measures — for example, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Open Skies Treaty and the Vienna Document 1990 of the Negotiations on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures Convened in Accordance with the

Relevant Provisions of the Concluding Document of the Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe — include many effective elements that we should preserve and, where necessary, update to make them fit for purpose in the context of the evolving international security landscape. In particular, a renewed effort is needed to increase transparency and build confidence in order to reduce the risk of an unintended escalation of tensions or military accidents. We continue to support our partners in their efforts to review those initiatives.

We must not underestimate the threats posed by small arms and light weapons — the single most significant contributor to conflicts, violence and crime — and in particular the effects wreaked by their illicit trade. The diversion of legal transfers of small arms and light weapons continues to pose a threat to peace and security, undermines human security and exacerbates the illicit trade in wildlife. We must turn those negative impacts into positive action towards building peaceful and stable societies. We look forward to the third United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We offer Ambassador Ramis of France our full support in her chairmanship. The United Kingdom continues to provide assistance for capacity-building in the priority area of stockpile management, including surplus disposal through destruction and ensuring better regulated exports. In 2016, we provided over £1.6 million for small arms and light weapons control in sub-Saharan Africa.

The United Kingdom is fully committed to achieving the goals of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, including their globalization. We remain committed to clearing the Falkland Islands of anti-personnel mines, in line with our obligation under article 5 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Phase 5 of the demining of the Falkland Islands began in October 2016 and builds on four previous phases of demining that were completed between 2009 and 2016, clearing more than 35 minefields.

While fulfilling its own obligations under those conventions, the United Kingdom also spends over £10 million per year through its Global Mine Action Programme on clearance of explosive remnants of war, survey, risk education and capacity-building. It is currently operating in Burma, Somalia, South Sudan, Zimbabwe, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Viet Nam, Cambodia and Sri Lanka. The Programme has delivered good results, including 21 million square metres of land cleared and released for productive use by communities.

We look forward to constructive engagement in the Commission's working groups. The United Kingdom believes that it is in the interest of all for the Disarmament Commission to demonstrate that it can reach agreement on priority issues and move the agenda forward. It was disappointing that last year we were unable to agree on establishing a third working group to consider the implementation of transparency- and confidence-building measures in outer space activities. We hope that this year we can finalize the conventional weapons paper in Working Group II, thereby freeing up the agenda for other issues to be considered at next year's meeting. We therefore call on Member States to avoid linkages between the two working groups and to engage in a meaningful way on that important agenda.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming the United Kingdom's support for the United Nations disarmament machinery, including the Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Mahfouz (Egypt): At the outset, let me express our sincere condolences to the Russian delegation on the sad occasion of the terrorist attack in Saint Petersburg yesterday.

I would like to congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your election to chair this year's substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) and to express our appreciation for all your efforts thus far. You have our full support and backing. Likewise, I would like to extend our congratulations to other members of the Bureau on their election, as well as to commend Venezuela and Bulgaria for chairing the two UNDC working groups.

I would like to associate my delegation with the joint statements delivered on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Group of Arab States and the Group of African States (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

This year is particularly important for the UNDC, as it comes after the unprecedented momentum in the light of the historic first session of the United Nations

conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, which took place last week. In our view, that objective is chiefly dependent upon the instrument's implementation by the nuclear-weapon States, in accordance with their legal obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as the achievement of universal adherence to the Treaty.

Seeking a substantive outcome this year is important if we are to preserve the relevance of the UNDC as a key component of the multilateral disarmament machinery, as the Commission has consistently failed to adopt any recommendations since 1999. We call on the nuclear-weapon States and major arms exporters to display the necessary political will to reach a substantive outcome on the two important issues on the Commission's agenda, so as to enable it to advance the cause of disarmament.

Let me begin with the UNDC agenda item entitled "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons". The starting point in that regard should be the implementation of resolution 69/58, on the follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, held on 26 September of that year. The resolution continues to chart a road map towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, with another high-level meeting to be held in New York next year. The UNDC should be ready to contribute to the deliberations on the implementation of that road map, especially with regard to the elements of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons to prohibit their possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use and to provide for their destruction globally, verifiably and without exception.

The universalization of the NPT is an indispensable step to achieving general and comprehensive nuclear disarmament. The speedy establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones across the world lends motivation to efforts aimed at achieving the wider objective of a world free of nuclear weapons and Global Zero. The international community has recognized the urgency of the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Yet, despite those repeated calls and the overwhelming global support for the establishment of such a zone, the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, an integral and essential part of the package of decisions that enabled the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995, has yet to be implemented. The resolution remains valid until its objectives are achieved and hence should be implemented without further delay. The UNDC provides a timely opportunity to reiterate the commitment of the international community to put the process back on track. It provides an adequate forum to reflect on how to break the current stalemate and to restore the credibility and sustainability of the NPT as a cornerstone treaty. The NPT review cycles will resume next month in Vienna.

UNDC deliberations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons are taking on growing importance. By contributing to the debate on confidence-building measures, the UNDC will help to address areas of concern relating to conventional weapons, including the outstanding issue of illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons. We need to build upon the constructive deliberations we held in Working Group II in 2015 and 2016.

We have consistently called for the following elements as integral components of any possible confidence-building measures: first, subjecting overproduction and ever-increasing stockpiles of conventional weapons in the hands of major arms exporters and producers to international inspection; secondly, mutual international accountability as the only guarantee against potential abuse of the existing imbalance between major arms producers and the rest of the world; and, thirdly, addressing protracted threats to international peace and security.

In that regard, there is no more profound threat to peace and stability, to international law, international humanitarian law, human rights law and to the core principles of the Charter of the United Nations itself than the crimes of aggression and foreign occupation, which employ conventional arms arsenals to threaten and dominate peoples and deny them their most basic human rights.

By developing such confidence-building measures, the UNDC would refine the traditional meaning of the term, thereby contributing conceptually to enhancing international peace, security and stability. Furthermore, we welcome the consensual outcome document of sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms

and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In addition, we look forward to a successful review conference next year in that regard, under the current French presidency.

Egypt fully supports the UNDC process as an integral component of the disarmament machinery established by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978. We stand ready to contribute constructively to the deliberations in order to ensure a positive outcome of the two working groups concurrently — one that reflects a considerable balance among the interests of all States. We are confident, Madam Chair, in your ability to steer our discussions towards a successful outcome to this cycle.

Mr. Ngundze (South Africa): On behalf of my delegation, let me join others in expressing our heartfelt condolences to the Russian Federation for the unfortunate incident that happened yesterday.

At the outset, I would liek to join other delegations in congratulating you, Madam Chair, on assuming your position as leader of this substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. South Africa also wishes to express its sincere appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Tevi of Vanuatu, for his tireless work as Chair of the 2016 substantive session. We also congratulate the Working Group Chairs on their elections. My delegation looks forward to working with them to make this session a success.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered previously by the representatives of Indonesia and Cameroon on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Group of African States, respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

I would like to make a few general remarks in my national capacity on the two agenda items before us, which my delegation looks forward to discussing in detail during the thematic debates.

South Africa remains committed to multilateralism as the best tool to deal with issues affecting international peace and security. In that regard, it is South Africa's considered view that the Disarmament Commission provides an inclusive platform for deliberations on the critical issues of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. The Commission has in the past made valuable contributions to our work in the field of disarmament and international security. We call on all delegations to show the necessary flexibility to allow this body to fulfil its responsibilities.

The fact that the Disarmament Commission has not made any progress since 1999 has become a growing concern. It is my delegation's hope that the discussions and deliberations during the next two weeks will be based on genuine political will and good faith, and that we will be able to make progress.

On the issue of nuclear disarmament, my delegation joins the majority of member States that have expressed deep concerns about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would befall humankind in case of a nuclear detonation, whether by design or accident. Only the total elimination of nuclear weapons and a legally binding assurance that they will never be produced again will guarantee a world free from the threat posed by nuclear weapons. In that connection, my delegation welcomes, as a bold and positive step, the convening of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, which began on 27 March.

My delegation is very pleased that the first session of the conference was a huge success and that it offered participating States an opportunity to exchange views on the main elements of the prohibition instrument, as mandated by resolution 71/258. While there was significant convergence among participating States on the key elements of such an instrument, we recognize that much remains to be done to finalize our work during the June and July session. We look forward to working with the President of the conference and all Member States to ensure that it reaches a successful outcome.

My delegation wishes to reiterate that our support for a prohibition treaty is without prejudice to the fulfilment of existing nuclear-disarmament commitments, in particular those agreed to in the context of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). As we approach the next NPT review cycle, it is imperative to recognize that the vitality and relevance of the Treaty, as the foundation of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, is dependent on the extent to which State parties implement their obligations and commitments. It is not acceptable for State parties to treat their obligations and commitments as an à la carte menu from which they can choose. We call upon all States parties to the NPT to honour their obligations and to faithfully and without preconditions

implement all the commitments agreed to in 1995, 2000 and 2010 without any further delay, including the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a zone in the Middle East free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

With regard to conventional weapons, South Africa, as a State party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, will play its part in the journey towards a world free of both anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions. We encourage States that have not yet done so, in particular those possessing such weapons, to join those instruments without delay. We call on States that are in a position to do so to assist States that request assistance in their national implementation efforts, at their request, and to provide assistance to the victims of those weapons.

My delegation expresses deep concern about the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which continues to contribute to the fuelling of conflicts, particularly in Africa. In that regard, South Africa will continue to advocate for the United Nations to invest more resources in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. South Africa will also continue to call on all Member States to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty, as the only international legally binding instrument that promotes transparency and cooperation and sets clear norms and criteria that States should adhere to when considering arms transfers, thereby preventing the illicit trade in conventional weapons.

In conclusion, my delegation looks forward to elaborating further on the two agenda items under discussion during the thematic debates and stands ready to participate actively during discussions and to work with all delegations towards achieving a consensus outcome during the session.

Mr. Amiya (Japan): Before making my statement, I would like to express my deepest condolences to the families of the victims of the terrorist attack in Saint Petersburg yesterday. My country expresses its solidarity with the injured and all of the people in the Russian Federation.

At the outset, I would also like to congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). I would also like to congratulate the newly elected members of the Bureau. I assure you and the Bureau of members of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the carrying out of your important tasks.

The UNDC has remained in deadlock for about 17 years, although it was once renowned as the leading deliberative United Nations body in the field of disarmament. Japan will continue to actively participate in the UNDC. However, all of us here should be aware that the lack of substantive outcomes in this body has put its raison d'être into serious question, and we should work together to find a way to reinvigorate it.

The recent developments in nuclear disarmament deliberations make us seriously concerned that the rift between the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States seems to have widened. Japan has consistently maintained that, as the major stakeholders, the engagement of the nuclear-weapon States is imperative in nuclear-disarmament deliberations in order to carry out effective disarmament measures.

Japan ascribes importance to the following measures, among others, as practical and concrete measures: first, enhancing transparency; secondly, the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); thirdly, the early commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and, fourthly, the development of nuclear-disarmament verification measures.

With regard to the CTBT, as co-coordinator for facilitating the Treaty's entry into force, Japan will continue to work to facilitate its early entry into force and to strongly call for its early ratification by the remaining annex 2 States. Pending the Treaty's entry into force, the full moratorium on nuclear testing must be maintained.

The early commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty is vital to the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons. The adoption of resolution 71/259 on such a treaty by an overwhelming majority of States during the present session of the General Assembly reflects broad international recognition of its importance. Japan welcomes the establishment of a high-level expert preparatory group on the topic and will actively contribute to its discussions.

As the only country ever to have suffered atomic bombings in wartime, we are of the view that nuclear disarmament must be promoted based on two understandings, namely, a clear understanding of the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons and an objective assessment of the reality of the security situation.

Despite the repeated calls by the international community, North Korea conducted two nuclear tests last year. In addition, last year alone, North Korea launched more than 20 ballistic missiles, including submarine-launched ballistic missiles. In 2017, North Korea has already launched ballistic missiles three times, including those that landed within Japan's exclusive economic zone. The series of nuclear tests and launches of ballistic missiles have raised the threat posed by North Korea to a new level. Furthermore, they represent a serious challenge to the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime based on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Therefore, Japan condemns North Korea in the strongest terms and urges it to immediately comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and other commitments. All Member States have an obligation to strictly and fully implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2270 (2016) and 2321 (2016).

The NPT remains the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is imperative to maintain and strengthen that regime. To that end, it is vital to achieve a meaningful outcome at the 2020 NPT Review Conference. Japan will make its utmost effort to that end through the 2020 NPT review process, starting this year. As a member of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), Japan will continue to strengthen cooperation with other States and groups of States.

The issue of the illicit trade in, and proliferation of, small arms and light weapons continues to pose a major threat to international peace and security. Japan stresses the importance of the continuous operation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and calls upon all Member States to provide data and information for those reporting frameworks.

Effectively implementing the Arms Trade Treaty and promoting its universalization are major challenges. Japan will actively work with other Member States and civil society to achieve the effective implementation of the Treaty. Rapid progress in science and industrial technology has led to great challenges in the field of conventional arms. Japan welcomes the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons, and will actively participate in the discussions.

Last but not least, it is time for us to work together to produce a constructive outcome in order to make a positive impact on the United Nations disarmament machinery. Japan will endeavour to ensure that this final year of the current triennial cycle leads to a positive outcome.

Mr. Pilven (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to convey our condolences to, and express my delegation's solidarity with, the Russian Federation, which was struck again yesterday by a heinous terrorist attack.

I would also like to congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your election as Chair of the third session of this cycle of the Disarmament Commission, which I hope will be positive, constructive and pragmatic. I assure you of the support of the French delegation to that end.

We must recognize that since the Commission's previous session, last year, serious crises have continued to spread and it is therefore urgent that we develop joint responses. There has been a proliferation of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, while the risk that they could be used by States or terrorist groups continues to pose a very real danger. In North Korea and Syria, non-proliferation standards, which are the cornerstone of our collective security, are regularly, and even openly, violated. The unacceptable recklessness of North Korean leaders, based on the rapid development of their nuclear and ballistic programmes, remains a cause of deep concern. The Security Council, through an unprecedented strengthening of its sanctions, has affirmed its determination not to tolerate such provocations and destabilizing behaviour.

The same also applies to chemical weapons, of which we have seen another example today. I remind the Commission that responsibility for such inhumane acts has already been attributed to the Syrian army, in three instances, and to Da'esh, in one instance, by the

Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism. The potential existence of chemical stocks on Syrian territory increases the risk of the proliferation of toxic chemicals, including among non-State actors. France will not tolerate this reversal, and those responsible for those actions should be held accountable.

These irrefutable facts do not end there. Conventional weapons continue to pose a major security challenge for all the regions of the world, whether they are affected by conflict or not. The year that just ended showed that the international community should continue to take action in the area of conventional weapons in order to prevent conventional weapons from falling into the hands of terrorist groups. Like other countries, France has, tragically, witnessed these problems.

Moreover, the threat of the use of biological weapons remains a matter of great concern. The risk of a biological agent falling into the hands of States or terrorist groups cannot be ruled out.

Finally, let us not forget that we increasingly rely on space applications. The spatial environment continues to deteriorate and is today facing many challenges, which we must address.

Those examples serve to illustrate the uncertainty and complexity of the strategic and security context we are working in. Given those challenges, it is more important than ever to re-establish and maintain coherency and cooperation in our efforts. In the current context, such a commitment to work applies to all of us at the bilateral, regional and international levels and, first and foremost, to the disarmament community. Renewing dialogue is essential to the credibility of our shared determination to build a better world for current and future generations. We must guard against polarized debates involving positions and initiatives that divide us, as well as speeches and actions that distract us and may jeopardize the instruments that have already been established. On the contrary, we should opt for a constructive discussion with concrete and realistic initiatives that allow us to move towards general and complete disarmament, in accordance with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

I hope that 2017 will allow us to show that we are capable of doing so. I also think that, with the opening of the new NPT review cycle and the first meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the next Review Conference, which is less than one month away, the NPT must remain the cornerstone of our collective security system. In that regard, allow me to recall my country's unambiguous commitment to nuclear disarmament, which we have demonstrated in both words and actions.

Our actions have been clear and transparent. As to France's seriousness, I would mention the irreversible dismantling of our nuclear testing site and the shutting down of our facilities for the production of fissile material for weapons; the zeroing out of the land-based component of our deterrence; the reduction by one third of our sea- and air-based missiles; and the legally binding negative security guarantees that have been agreed with nearly 100 countries.

Our words have been clear, realistic and based on a pragmatic vision. As stated by the President of the Republic, France shares the ultimate goal of the total elimination of weapons once the strategic context allows it. Therefore, disarmament must take into account all the factors that affect strategic stability. Logically, therefore, the only realistic and pragmatic approach to nuclear disarmament is a step-by-step approach that does not jeopardize regional or international stability and is in accordance with the principle of undiminished security for all.

The principle of the immediate prohibition of nuclear weapons is incompatible with such a pragmatic and progressive approach to nuclear disarmament, as established in article VI of the NPT. In a strategic context that is characterized, at both the national and international levels, by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, can we realistically say that the security conditions for a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons really exist? Can we believe that this initiative will not divide the States parties to the NPT, at the risk of undermining it? That is how my country, and a number of others that continue to base their ultimate security on nuclear deterrence, see things. For those reasons, like other partners, France will not participate in the negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons.

On the other hand, we are in favour of specific disarmament measures within the essential framework of the NPT, which should remain the foundation of our collective security. Negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty and the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) are crucial, complementary steps

towards that goal. France will also actively participate in the high-level expert group on a fissile material cut-off treaty, which will meet in Geneva from 31 July to 11 August. In that regard, the General Assembly's adoption by a large majority of resolution 71/259, which initiated the group's work, shows that tangible progress is possible in the context of a progressive and pragmatic approach to nuclear disarmament.

A comprehensive approach to disarmament and non-proliferation requires us to act, given other deadlines this year, in particular in the field of conventional weapons. As in many other areas, there is no single response, but a series of specific, adapted and consistent measures whose primary aim must be to strengthen international security by taking into account the security concerns of all and to ensure that all parties benefit.

The universalization and full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, which includes 130 signatories and more than 90 States parties, should be a priority. The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has made it possible to bolster a joint understanding of the threat posed by the illicit traffic in these deadly weapons. At the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms, the international community will have to rise to the challenge this threat poses, while the third Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which will be held in 2018, will allow us to take stock of the actions undertaken so far and to look ahead. It should be an opportunity to take full account of the security risks generated by the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and to work towards the implementation of concrete measures. As Chair of the Conference, France will aim for a complete, inclusive and transparent preparatory process to that end.

The Biological Weapons Convention is also an essential tool for safeguarding international peace and security. The results of the eighth Review Conference were disappointing. We must collectively draw lessons from them and work to ensure the success of the next conference of the States parties, in December 2017. The adoption this year of concrete and realistic decisions is needed to preserve the authority and strengthen the implementation of standards prohibiting biological weapons.

Finally, turning to outer space, which I mentioned earlier, France welcomed the consensus adoption in June by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space of the first set of 12 guidelines on the long-term viability of space activities. The responses must be pragmatic and look for specific and immediately measurable benefits. That is why France promotes the adoption of transparency and confidence-building measures and of standards to guide the behaviour of stakeholders in space. My delegation hopes that we can agree on the inclusion of an agenda item on outer space for our work this year.

Allow me to conclude, Madam Chair, by reiterating my delegation's support and by assuring you that France will participate constructively and pragmatically in the work of the Commission.

Mr. Barro (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, allow me to express my sympathy and condolences to the delegation of the Russian Federation following the attack in Saint Petersburg yesterday.

Senegal associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Cameroon, on behalf of the Group of African States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

I would like to express to you, Madam Chair, my heartfelt congratulations on your election to lead this session of the Disarmament Commission and to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau and warmly commend the outgoing Chairs of the two Working Groups for their outstanding efforts, which will make it possible for us to make progress during the Commission's current session. I assure the new Chair's of my delegation's support. We have high hopes for a productive session leading to recommendations in this final year of the current cycle, which began under Senegal's chairship, in 2015.

Between 1977 and 1999, the Commission was able to adopt 16 directives, guidelines and recommendations. However, the Commission has been blocked for the past 18 years and has been unable to reach agreement on a significant outcome. It is certainly true that the global disarmament and non-proliferation regimes continue to face many obstacles that considerably undermine the legitimate efforts made by Member States in this area. Nonetheless, my country hopes the Commission will be able to make specific recommendations on the issues on its agenda this year, which is also the sixty-fifth

anniversary of its establishment, on 11 January 1952, by virtue of resolution 502 (VI).

As States, we must make a collective diplomatic effort and show increased political will if we aspire to effectively respond to the security challenges we face. A multilateral approach is therefore the only valid option, given the global nature of issues related to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control, which are best addressed in the framework of universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory multilateral agreements. Unilateralism and the pursuit of solely national interests can lead only to mistrust, suspicion, lack of understanding, defiance and confrontation.

Furthermore, the increasing importance of disarmament and non-proliferation challenges, which have recently given rise to action, should serve to facilitate a positive outcome this year. It is therefore essential that we work to restore the credibility of the Commission, which requires that we go beyond discussions that in the past have prevented us from developing recommendations.

As far as conventional weapons are concerned, we welcome the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty, in December 2014, and the second Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty, which was held successfully in Geneva in August 2016.

Nonetheless, my country remains concerned about the illicit trade, transfer, production, possession and circulation of small arms and light weapons, as well as their excessive stockpiling and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, particularly the African continent, where we continue to be subjected to the pernicious and destabilizing effects of their illegal transfer. We therefore urge countries that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Arms Trade Treaty in order to ensure its universalization, which continues to contribute to the control of such weapons, and call for strengthening the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which is still not legally binding, as well as the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. My country also welcomes the outcome document of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held in June last year.

With regard to nuclear weapons, Senegal deplores the failure of the ninth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in 2015, which, regrettably, was unable to adopt a consensus final document. Nevertheless, rather than discouraging us, that failure should make us redouble our efforts to achieve our ultimate objective of nuclear disarmament. Based on that firm belief, my country is more committed than ever to the complete elimination of military nuclear activities as the only way to prevent the global devastation and misery that would result from the use of nuclear weapons. That is why we believe that it is more important than ever to ensure that ridding the world of nuclear weapons is a shared fundamental goal for us all. We also remain convinced that strengthening the authority of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which has yet to be universalized, is a top priority, as is the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the implementation of all obligations under the NPT and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction.

However, the nuclear-weapon States must agree on an irreversible, verifiable and more ambitious programme for reducing their arsenals, while at the same time guaranteeing the security of non-nuclear-weapon States through a legally binding instrument. We firmly believe that existing nuclear-weapon-free zones must be strengthened and new ones created, particularly in the Middle East. Lastly, we reaffirm the right of countries to pursue the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to ensure the effective and secure transfer of such technologies to States that have assumed their obligations under the NPT, which will require strengthening the authority and capabilities of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

In conclusion, we believe that with the commitment of all of us, the Disarmament Commission will be able to reach strong consensus on the items under its consideration over the coming weeks. It is important to show that we have the political will to restore its credibility.

Mr. Garrido Melo (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by expressing my delegation's heartfelt condolences to the Russian delegation and the people of the Russian Federation for yesterday's heinous attack in the Saint Petersburg metro.

I would like to congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your election to preside over the Disarmament Commission, and to express our pleasure at seeing a fellow Latin American guiding our deliberations. Last week, the great majority of us participated in another process, that of negotiating a draft convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, also steered by a distinguished Latin American diplomat. That is clearly no mere coincidence. We would also like to take this opportunity to publicly acknowledge and thank Mr. Kim Won-soo and his team for their exemplary work in the Office for Disarmament Affairs.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered earlier by the representatives of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and El Salvador, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/CN.10/PV.362). Their considerations and views reflect the position of Chile's delegation.

Chile has always been a staunch proponent and promoter of general and complete disarmament, and has always encouraged a broad, transparent and democratic multilateral debate, consistent with its foreign policy. That is clearly borne out by our participation in regional and global forums on international security and disarmament. We adhere strictly to the principle of the indivisibility of international security, by which all States, regardless of size or power, have the shared responsibility of contributing to building an international order based on cooperation and governed by rules.

We firmly support the notion that this forum must provide a more focused debate that can accurately identify the elements of disarmament and enable us to fully carry out our mandate of generating recommendations and to move on after years of stagnation. The Disarmament Commission has not been able to avoid the current crisis in the disarmament machinery. The fact that it operates under the most extreme version of the consensus rule has changed the meaning and scope that this body acquired over many years as a generator of dialogue and promoter of broad agreements.

One cause that is extremely important to Chile is the democratization of international organizations and of multilateralism in general. In that regard, we believe that civil society is called on to play a major role in disarmament, unhampered by procedural limitations. Last week, during the conference to negotiate a draft convention prohibiting nuclear weapons, we were able to witness the significant ways in which civil society, particularly academia, can contribute to our work. I think we ought to seriously consider that idea.

Chile believes that nuclear disarmament, considered in the context of weapons of mass destruction, is the most pressing issue we have to deal with, owing to its incomparably destructive capability, which puts humankind's very existence in jeopardy. That is why the deliberations of this forum and its potential recommendations are crucial.

We would also like to highlight the fact that in recent years we have successfully consolidated and improved the instruments governing conventional weapons. That represents significant progress for international humanitarian law and a clear manifestation of the concept of human security, which puts human beings at the centre of our work. However, practical confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons are also key. As we begin the last year of the three-year cycle, we should once again commit to taking a pragmatic and flexible approach to the upcoming negotiations, with a view to achieving concrete results, and to which the delegation of Chile pledges its full support.

Mr. Vieira (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by expressing Brazil's solidarity with the people and the Government of the Russian Federation in the wake of yesterday's horrific terrorist attacks.

I would also like to congratulate you, Madam Chair, and the other members of the Bureau, on your election to preside over the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We are pleased to see a country from our region presiding over the Commission. I pledge the support of my delegation as you discharge your duties.

(*spoke in English*)

Brazil aligns itself with the statement delivered previously by the representative of El Salvador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States(see A/CN.10/PV.362), and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

Nuclear disarmament is a long-standing objective of the international community. Our understanding of the indiscriminate power of nuclear weapons and the existential threat they pose to humankind has resulted in several initiatives and proposals aimed at

eliminating them. This issue was the subject of the General Assembly's very first resolution, resolution 1(I), which affirmed the goal of the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction. At the beginning of the work of the Organization, the existence of such indiscriminate and destructive weapons already sat badly with the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. It is regrettable that, 71 years later, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation remain unresolved issues on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission.

As a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Brazil is firmly committed to the objective of nuclear non-proliferation. In our view, the key to a sustainable non-proliferation regime lies in combating the incentives to proliferate. Any approach is illogical when it focuses exclusively on non-proliferation while ignoring necessary progress in nuclear disarmament and some countries' insistence on relying on a nuclear deterrent. How can we legitimately argue that such weapons are too devastating to be possessed by most of us but can still be retained by a few? As former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has repeatedly said, there are no right hands for wrong weapons.

The nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime is under increasing strain, as the failure of the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to adopt an outcome document showed. While States that possess nuclear weapons or belong to alliances that contemplate the possibility of resorting to nuclear weapons persist in their unwillingness to significantly reduce their reliance on them, the grand bargain that enabled the NPT to come into being becomes increasingly harder to sustain, thereby threatening both the nuclear-disarmament and the non-proliferation pillars of the Treaty. The continued existence of nuclear weapons is a threat to humankind. Such weapons increase tensions throughout the world, foster suspicion and hinder cooperation. The limited reductions that have been made so far are unfortunately offset by the continuing modernization and qualitative improvement of nuclear arsenals.

The Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna deepened our collective realization of the immediate, mid- and long-term grave consequences of a nuclear-weapon explosion, which would not be confined to national borders but would have regional and even global effects, thus threatening the survival of our planet. Those devastating and indiscriminate effects would mainly affect the civilian population, which makes them incompatible with international law, particularly international humanitarian and human rights law. As Governments, we must view their elimination as a moral and ethical imperative and a legal obligation.

I reiterate Brazil's conviction that nuclear weapons should be prohibited and completely eliminated in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner, according to clearly defined benchmarks and timelines. Just last week, the United Nations took a historic step in that regard with the convening of the first session of a conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons leading to their total elimination. We welcome the substantive engagement of all the delegations present and are confident that the conference will succeed in fulfilling its mandate of adopting a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons at the end of its second session. In line with resolution 69/77, which recommended that the Disarmament Commission's agenda provide for focused deliberations, Brazil believes that the Commission should concentrate on those three important aspects of nuclear disarmament — transparency, irreversibility and verification. That would ensure that its work complements and builds on the efforts ongoing in the conference. Among other things, discussions on verification could build on the 16 verification principles that the Commission agreed on in 1988.

Brazil participates regularly in confidence-building mechanisms at the multilateral level, such as the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the United Nations Report on Military Expenditures. We also submit regular reports under the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. Furthermore, Brazil is a party to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, and has signed the Arms Trade Treaty, currently in the process of being ratified. Confidence-building measures at the regional level are also relevant. Brazil and its neighbours in South America are strengthening confidence and enhancing transparency in defence policies,

including on information on military expenditures and conventional arms transfers. While we recognize the important role of confidence-building measures, we are open to considering other aspects relating to conventional weapons that could be dealt with by the Disarmament Commission.

Brazil would like to see the consideration of a third agenda item, as also provided for in resolution 69/77, and supports the proposal submitted at the Commission's previous session for making that item the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We look forward to engaging in the informal consultations to be convened on the issue. We would like to emphasize that the addition of a third agenda item should not detract from efforts to advance the other two, nor should it be used to create artificial linkages between separate issues. Each topic must be considered on its own merits.

The multilateral disarmament machinery has played a crucial role in fostering dialogue and confidence among States, thereby helping to promote peace and security. With specific regard to the Disarmament Commission, I would like to underscore the verification principles, which constitute a fundamental element of any disarmament treaty; the 1996 guidelines on international arms transfers; and the 1999 guidelines on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, to name only a few important outcomes of past sessions. The last of those in particular has been politically important to the development of such zones around the world, including the long-overdue establishment of one in the Middle East.

Those achievements notwithstanding, the Disarmament Commission has unfortunately failed to fulfil its mandate for the past 18 years. There can be no rational justification for a failure to reach agreement on substantive recommendations this year, which will conclude the current triennial cycle. While no one denies the complexity of the current global security situation, we must not forget that this body was able to agree on recommendations to the General Assembly during times of great tension such as the Cold War. Greater political will is needed, Madam Chair, to break the Commission's deadlock, and you can rest assured of Brazil's constructive engagement towards that objective.

Mr. Díaz Reina (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the delegation of Colombia, I would first like to convey our sincere condolences to the Russian delegation in connection with yesterday's attack in Saint Petersburg. We stand by the Government and the people of the Russian Federation at this difficult time.

I echo previous speakers in congratulating you, Madam Chair, on your election. Your leadership during this substantive session of the Disarmament Commission will be crucial if we are to overcome the protracted impasse of more than 15 years on some of the issues that we will consider in the next few days.

Colombia aligns itself with the statements made earlier by the representatives of El Salvador, on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV. 362).

My delegation recognizes and reaffirms that, in the framework of the disarmament machinery, the Disarmament Commission is the designated forum for addressing specific issues with a view to making relevant and concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. We also trust that this year the need for consensus will not result in the use of the veto, which would make it impossible to reach any agreement. My statement will cover five specific points — anti-personnel mines, conventional weapons, cluster munitions, weapons of mass destruction and Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 2321 (2016).

First, considering that this week we celebrate the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, I would like to start by mentioning the fact that more than 15 years ago Colombia, in recognition of its international obligations and its particular circumstances, decided to launch a comprehensive mine-action programme based on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, including mine clearance and decontamination activities, victim assistance, mine-risk education and cooperation and international assistance. We would like to stress the importance of mine action in the negotiations on the agreement to end the conflict that culminated in its signing in November 2016. It played a key role from the very beginning of the process with the implementation of pilot demining projects in El Orejón, in Antioquia, and Santa Helena, in Meta, which became a model for confidence-building measures between the parties and marked the start of the joint efforts by the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia guerrillas, the armed forces, civil organizations and

civil society that paved the way for reconciliation and reparation. Post-conflict reconstruction through mine action will directly benefit the affected communities and contribute to their development.

Secondly, Colombia is of the view that the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, ammunition and explosives is a cross-cutting issue that is directly linked to other threats to international peace and security such as international terrorism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, money-laundering and the illegal exploitation of natural resources. Colombia's participation in international, regional and subregional conventional-weapon forums is based on three guiding principles — banning the transfer of weapons to non-State actors, criminalizing the illegal possession and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, and promoting inter-institutional and international cooperation and information-sharing. In an example of our active participation in that regard, at the General Assembly's current session Colombia coordinated the drafting of resolution 71/48, entitled "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects". We presented the resolution, which was sponsored by more than 80 countries, jointly with South Africa and Japan and incorporated into it several elements of the outcome document of the sixth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Thirdly, I would like to note Colombia's position that banning cluster munitions, in addition to being a treaty goal, benefits the international community by prohibiting a weapon that has claimed a vast number of victims and has dehumanized and degraded conflicts, in violation of international law. In that connection, we reiterate that eliminating such weapons is a moral imperative for the international community, and we hope it will soon be a legal obligation for all States, on a basis of solidarity and cooperation. Colombia is committed to disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. In that regard, in 2009, despite the fact that the Convention on Cluster Munitions had not yet entered into force, Colombia worked to promote its principles, voluntarily and practically honouring its provisions and eliminating all its stocks of such weapons in an example of best practices at the national and international level.

Fourthly, Colombia has continued its constitutional commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation with regard to weapons of mass destruction. For a country like mine, which has sought and yearned for peace for so long, revitalizing the disarmament machinery is crucial, as is seeing significant progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. That is why, as a State party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Colombia has been participating in the conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination. In that context, Colombia believes that these distinct approaches are complementary rather than mutually exclusive, given that they have in common the implementation of article VI of the NPT and that actions aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons must be inclusive and based on ongoing dialogue with nuclear-weapon States.

With regard to chemical weapons, Colombia is committed to the disarmament and non-proliferation regime for weapons of mass destruction, in particular based on its status as a signatory to the Convention on Chemical Weapons, and fully supports the international verification efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons as a means of implementing and complementing the Convention. We believe it is essential to strengthen education on the responsible uses of chemistry, to improve the awareness of the industry and the education sector about the Convention's provisions and to enhance assistance and protection in the case of incidents involving chemical weapons. Finally, with regard to biological weapons, Colombia advocates the universalization of the Biological Weapons Convention, the first multilateral disarmament treaty to ban an entire category of weapons of mass destruction as the only way of eliminating the threat posed by the malicious use of pathogens.

Lastly, with regard to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), Colombia and Chile have been working on a peer-review mechanism to enable both countries to share best practices and lessons learned during its implementation. With the support of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) and the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism, Colombia and Chile will share information on the relevant institutions and policies in their respective countries so as to facilitate the resolution's implementation. It will

be the first project of that nature in Latin America and the Caribbean and the second worldwide.

Finally, I would like to point out that Colombia is committed to implementing the Security Council's sanctions on non-proliferation and therefore abides by the provisions of resolution 2321 (2016) and those of previous resolutions regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Colombia has appealed urgently for an end to any action that undermines peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and for that country's full compliance with international commitments to disarmament and non-proliferation.

In conclusion, Colombia believes that all disarmament and non-proliferation efforts should be accompanied by transparency- and confidence-building measures and ongoing dialogue among the States Members of the United Nations. We therefore participate in international forums, such as the Disarmament Commission, that consider subjects of general interest, providing an opportunity to reaffirm the commitment and the essential political will of all its attendees to attain the objectives that inspired the creation of our Organization. The delegation of Colombia pledges its full support for the success of the Commission, which for so many years has failed to produce concrete results.

Mr. Jiménez (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Nicaragua is pleased to congratulate you on your election as Chair, Madam, and wishes you every success. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

We would also like to echo the message of solidarity sent by our President, Mr. Daniel Ortega, to the Russian Federation in the wake of the attack in the Saint Petersburg metro yesterday, and to express our solidarity with the Russian people and the families of the victims.

My delegation endorses the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (NAM) and by El Salvador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

My delegation supports the work being carried out by the United Nations Disarmament Commission. We need to preserve its relevance by continuing to discuss specific disarmament-related issues with a view to submitting concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. It is unfortunate that we have been unable to make such recommendations in previous sessions.

Nicaragua emphasizes the importance of making progress towards the achievement of complete disarmament, which includes not only weapons of mass destruction, but also highly destructive and indiscriminate conventional weapons, the use of which contravenes the fundamental principles of international law and international humanitarian law. In that regard we welcome the recent General Assembly resolution 71/71, entitled "Follow-up to the 2013 high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament", a NAM initiative that calls for the holding of a high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament by 2018 at the latest. With that, our countries fulfil their objective of intensifying the call on States to initiate negotiations on a convention, in accordance with a set time frame, on the prohibition and complete elimination of nuclear weapons. We welcome the designation of 26 September as International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons as a way of raising awareness.

With regard to disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, Nicaragua, as a State party to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), calls for evaluation of the resolutions and declaration on the subject so that progress can be made to stop the arms race and find the means to ensure their complete eradication under a transparent and effective international system of control.

With regard to General Assembly resolution 71/258 — which, among other things, calls for the holding in 2018 of a conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination — Nicaragua believes that all States Members of the United Nations should participate in the process, without exception, in order to reach a tangible, effective and suitable solution. We also believe that such an instrument should be universal in nature and support efforts to include humanitarian concerns in discussions on nuclear weapons. In that regard, we welcome the three international conferences on the impact of nuclear weapons.

Nicaragua regrets that some countries blocked the consensus needed to conclude a final document at the ninth NPT review conference. Its failure undermined multilateral efforts and the disarmament

machinery, which was working to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, and also affected its credibility and dependability. The international community should take concrete action, and nuclear States should immediately implement their commitments under article VI of the NPT, the agreements in the area of nuclear disarmament reached in 2000 and the plan of action on nuclear disarmament adopted in 2010. We reaffirm our hope that a legally binding instrument will be adopted that guarantees the safety of States, regardless of their type or geographical location. Such a document should take into account the International Court of Justice advisory opinion of 1996 (A/51/218, annex), which indicated that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity as well as a violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

We applaud and welcome the implementation of the plan of action concluded between Iran and the countries of the P5+1, as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency, which contributes to international peace and security. Nicaragua respects the inalienable rights of all States to conduct research, produce and peacefully use nuclear technology, without discrimination and in accordance with the provisions of the NPT.

Nicaragua, as a member of the world's first nuclear-weapon-free zone, celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We firmly believe that it is through the establishment of such zones that we can strengthen the regime and international peace and security, contributing to nuclear disarmament. In that regard, we regret the failure to implement the agreement to hold in 2012 a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We reiterate that the holding of such a conference is an important part of the final document of the NPT Review Conference. We therefore urge parties to hold this conference as soon as possible.

With regard to confidence-building measures in the area of conventional weapons, we welcome measures that will promote international peace and security. These need to be taken in strict compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, respecting the specific security concerns of States. My country has made a commitment to and has taken the corresponding actions to prevent and eliminate the illicit trade in arms. Nicaragua has made a commitment to peace for its people and has committed to combat and eradicate illicit drug trafficking. In that regard we have adopted special law No. 510 on the monitoring and regulation of firearms, munitions, explosives and related materials.

Nicaragua was proud to welcome the historic official proclamation of Latin America as a zone of peace on 29 January 2014, the purpose of which is to forever eradicate the threat or use of force in our region. It includes the firm commitment of the States of the region to nuclear disarmament as a priority objective. We also welcome the establishment of Latin America as a zone free of cluster munitions, which was declared during the fifth meeting of States parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in 2014. Our country participates in the fight against anti-personnel mines and in 2010 successfully implemented a national demining programme and declared Nicaragua and all of Central America to be the first subregion free of land mines. We stress the importance of cooperation for demining and providing assistance to victims, and hope that there will be continued success in future.

Many have pointed out that the disarmament machinery has come to a standstill. However, we have been unable to resolve the real problem, which is the political will of States to make tangible progress, in particular in terms of nuclear disarmament. It is under those complex conditions that we must work in the Commission. We must continue to promote a peace-loving world to attain the goal of living well, especially to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. With the requisite will, it is never too late to make changes.

Mr. Alhakim (Iraq): (*spoke in Arabic*) My delegation would first like to express its condolences to the Russian delegation and the families of the victims of the act of terrorism that took place in the Saint Petersburg metro, leaving many dead or injured. We appreciate the role of Russia in fighting international terrorism, a phenomenon facing many countries around the world.

My delegation wishes to congratulate you, Madam, on assuming the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for the 2017 session. We are confident that your expertise and diplomatic acumen will allow us to reach a positive outcome on the topics that the Commission will consider during the session. We assure you and the members of

the Bureau of our support in ensuring the success of our work.

My delegation also takes this opportunity to congratulate the delegation of Venezuela on its appointment as Chair of Working Group I and the delegation of Bulgaria on its appointment as Chair of Working Group II.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of Qatar on behalf of the Group of Arab States and of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

Iraq has stressed its position vis-à-vis disarmament and non-proliferation matters. Article 9 (e) of our Constitution states that the Government respects and implements the international obligations of Iraq to prohibit the proliferation, development, production and use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and prohibits the development, manufacturing, production and use of related material technology and communication systems.

The Government of Iraq is aware that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is one of the chief components providing the international community with a real guarantee against the use or threat of use of deadly weapons. It is also a guarantee for establishing international peace and security by reaching common and practical solutions through multilateral negotiations to reach collective agreements. Therefore my Government voted in favour of General Assembly resolution 71/258 on establishing a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination.

My Government also condemns the nuclear and ballistic-missile tests carried out by North Korea, which threaten international peace and security. We call on North Korea to cease these experiments, which threaten the countries of the region and violate Security Council resolutions.

My Government is concerned about the possibility of weapons of mass destruction ending up in the hands of terrorist groups, and we stress the need for concerted efforts by everyone to contribute to preventing non-State parties from acquiring such weapons, given that nuclear terrorism is the biggest and most dangerous threat to international security. We must therefore enhance nuclear-security measures as a necessary means for preventing nuclear materials from reaching the hands of terrorists and other unauthorized entities. We call on all relevant parties to implement effective security measures on nuclear materials and their possession, including nuclear weapons and nuclear facilities under their control, and to prevent any non-governmental entities from acquiring the information and technology necessary to use such materials for criminal purposes.

Establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone is a step towards nuclear disarmament. Any effort to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East must begin with some major steps. Notably, Israel must join and ratify the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and subject its nuclear facilities to the safeguards regime. It must also get rid of its nuclear weapons completely. We call for the implementation of Security Council resolution 487 (1981), which calls on Israel to immediately place its nuclear facilities under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

We urge for the implementation of paragraph 14 of resolution 687 (1991), which calls for the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons in the Middle East. We further call on the Secretary-General and the sponsors of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East to fulfil their obligations with respect to the full implementation of this resolution by establishing such a zone in the Middle East and to follow up on the 2010 agreement to hold a nuclear disarmament conference in the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations and with the assistance of the sponsoring States: the United States, the United Kingdom and Russia.

The failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference to reach consensus on a draft outcome document is a setback for international efforts to rid the region of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction and has prevented any review of obligations met over the past few years. My Government therefore stresses the need to commit to the 1995 resolution on the basis of which an indefinite extension was granted to NPT, with the understanding that its validity is based on whether its objectives are met.

My delegation takes this opportunity to stress the inalienable right of all parties to the Treaty, especially developing countries, to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and to achieve economic growth, without discrimination and

impediments, provided that their activities are subjected to the control of the IAEA and the requirements of the NPT regime.

Like other member States, we are aware of the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the multilateral forum for disarmament negotiations. At the same time we would like to express our concern about its current state. Since it has been unable to fulfil its role in terms of reaching an agreement on a programme of work, we must redouble our efforts to achieve a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that meets the concerns of all member States.

The dangers posed by conventional weapons have many repercussions and can be similar to those of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. My delegation is aware of the negative effects of these weapons with respect to impeding the process of development and societies. They play a major role in armed conflicts and are a source of concern for many countries. We must therefore make serious and concerted efforts to implement international resolutions to combat the spread of these weapons and ensure that they do not end up in the hands of armed terrorists groups that use any means necessary to acquire such weapons and use them against civilians, especially women and children.

In conclusion, we would like to stress that we are fully prepared to cooperate with you, Madam, and the other members of the Bureau to determine the best possible methods to achieve the purposes of the Commission. You can rely on the support and assistance of the delegation of Iraq.

Ms. Dris (Malaysia): At the outset, Malaysia joins other delegations in expressing its condolences to the people and the Government of the Russian Federation, as well as to the victims of the Saint Petersburg metro explosions. Our thoughts and prayers are with them during this difficult time.

Malaysia congratulates you, Madam, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) for the 2017 substantive session. Let me also congratulate all the members of the Bureau and the Chairs of the respective Working Groups. My delegation would also like to thank Ambassador Odo Tevi, Permanent Representative of Vanuatu, for his contribution and efforts as Chair of the UNDC in 2016.

Malaysia aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

As we enter the last phase of the triennial cycle, the UNDC must exert much-needed leadership, display the required political will and commit to exercising flexibility on long-standing positions to achieve concrete results. That is essential to ensure that the Commission does not lose its credibility as the sole specialized body with universal membership in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

With three weeks ahead of us, we believe that we should build on the momentum of the recently concluded United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination. The spirit of cooperation and constructive discussions shown by delegations during the Conference should be emulated by us here at the Commission.

Malaysia continues to uphold the principles that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) must continue to guide our vision to general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. Malaysia wishes to also recall the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons (A/51/218, annex) of 8 July 1996. The advisory opinion, among other things, unanimously concluded that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, under strict and effective control. We see merit in reiterating the urgency of conducting the Commission's work on the agenda of nuclear weapons in that context.

One month from now, many delegations will be in Vienna to participate in the first Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT. Malaysia is of the view that this year's Preparatory Committee is important as it provides us the opportunity yet again to collectively cooperate toward achieving the NPT objectives of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

With regard to conventional weapons, my delegation commends the progress made during the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its

Aspects in New York in June last year. We reiterate our concern that the danger posed by conventional weapons, especially in conflict situations, is alarming in terms of deaths and injuries.

My delegation remains committed to the establishment of adequate and stringent domestic laws to effectively control the circulation of and illicit trade in conventional arms. We also continue to support confidence-building measures at all levels in the field of conventional weapons and our collective efforts to strengthen international peace and security. We believe that more can be done to narrow the gap between divergent views of the membership in this field.

My delegation takes note of the fact that the programme of work will now include consultations on a third agenda item on transparency and confidence-building measures in outer-space activities. We hope that the third agenda creates a domino effect in encouraging progress on tangible recommendations on the first two agenda items in the work of the UNDC. Malaysia commits its full support and cooperation to you, Madam Chair, in engaging in the discussions of the Commission in a realistic and pragmatic manner.

Mr. Bhattarai (Nepal): First, I wish to join others in extending Nepal's heartfelt condolences to and express solidarity with the Russian Federation in the face of the recent explosions in a metro station in Saint Petersburg. Our heart goes to the victims of the barbaric act and their loved ones at this tragic moment. Nepal condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations anywhere in the world.

Madam Chair, I congratulate you on your election to preside over the third phase of the triennial cycle of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and wish you every success in your efforts to steer the Commission in its new substantive session. I commend the excellent and dedicated stewardship of Senegal and Vanuatu in the first and second phases of the triennial cycle, respectively. I also congratulate the Bureau members, as well as the Chairs of the Working Groups, on their respective elections. My delegation is fully aware of the challenging task that you have assumed and expresses its readiness to work closely with you in order to achieve a fruitful outcome at the end of the triennial cycle.

I also thank Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for sharing with us his assessment on contemporary issues of disarmament.

Nepal aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

Apart from conventional challenges, the international community is confronted with ever-evolving and increasingly complex security challenges such as terrorism, violent extremism, epidemics, environmental disasters and cyberthreats, which spill over international borders. The increasing amount of worldwide military expenditures, the escalation of armed conflicts in various regions, rising terrorism and violent extremism and the State actions to counter, contain and eliminate them suggest a reversal of the two decades of post-Cold War peace and consequent challenges in ensuring national security, especially for smaller and weaker countries. Therefore, United Nations disarmament institutions should strengthen themselves, reinforce one another's activities and work in a complementary and synchronized fashion to achieve the objective of international peace and security as envisioned by the United Nations Charter. The UNDC, with its universal membership, has a particular responsibility to that end.

Despite having a commendable history of forging consensus on contentious issues of disarmament, as well as that of codifying principles, guidelines and recommendations to achieve universal disarmament, we have to acknowledge that the UNDC has failed to deliver any substantive recommendation since 1999. However, the world community should not forget that the fate of humankind relies on the wise decisions the Commission makes to achieve universal peace and security by rising to the challenges beyond the confines of the traditional concept of national security. The international community should demonstrate the requisite political commitment to enhancing trust and confidence so as to ensure mutual and collective security for each other. We should also be determined to address the current impasse in which the Commission finds itself by collectively, effectively and in a timely manner demonstrating our genuine political will and exercising our flexibility to the utmost.

Nepal reaffirms its principled position that it is only the time-bound, general and complete disarmament of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction that can ensure universal peace and security. Nepal continues to emphasize that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Abhorring the humanitarian

and environmental consequences of the deliberate or accidental detonation of nuclear arsenals, we also believe that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is against the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international humanitarian and human rights laws.

As the sole specialized and deliberative forum within the United Nations disarmament architecture, the Disarmament Commission should also reinforce the ongoing negotiations to formulate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.

As a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and a signatory to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), Nepal emphasizes that the States possessing nuclear weapons should respect the importance of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and the verifiability of nuclear weapons for their total elimination. Nepal believes that, as a core component of the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, the credibility of NPT lies in the effective implementation of its mutually reinforcing pillars. We also support the inalienable right of all States to the peaceful use of nuclear energy as per the framework set by this Treaty.

Nepal believes that confidence-building measures rooted in political commitments have the potential to create an environment conducive to general and complete disarmament. Apart from conducting a general exchange of information on military capability, States should abide strictly by the reporting obligations, compliance mechanisms and verification regimes established by multilateral instruments such as the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the NPT and the CTBT, among others. However, the major goal of such confidence-building measures should be the realization of universally recognized principles, particularly those contained in the Charter of the United Nations. My delegation believes that only a re-energized and consensus-oriented Disarmament Commission can strengthen the Secretary-General's call for a surge in diplomacy for peace by enhancing States' capacity to prevent conflict through various confidence-building measures.

Nepal also believes that women, youth, civil society, academia and the private sector have important roles to play in spreading awareness and educating the masses to urge their respective Governments to use confidence-building measures related to disarmament. My delegation therefore asks that all member States make full use of the potential of confidence-building measures in all regions of the world, generally, and among countries with competing and conflicting military aspirations in particular.

As the host of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Nepal reaffirms that a regional approach to disarmament complements the global approach and should therefore be synchronized with a global approach to enhancing international peace and security. Nepal is also convinced that such regional mechanisms can play greater roles in promoting nuclear non-proliferation, general disarmament and confidence-building measures at the regional and subregional levels to realize a peaceful world devoid of conflicts and misunderstanding among States. Such regional centres should therefore be further strengthened, well resourced and developed as repositories of best practices for disseminating disarmament-related information. In that regard, Nepal is committed to continuing to contribute to proactive measures by promoting disarmament activities and encouraging confidence-building at regional and subregional levels through education, as well as by providing track-II forums for that purpose.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate the central role of the Disarmament Commission in promoting the collective ownership and global responsibility of all States in the task of ensuring a peaceful world through non-proliferation, disarmament and confidence-building measures. We must muster the political will and courage to commit ourselves to engaging constructively with each other with the shared objectives of ensuring global peace and security, realizing a better future for humankind and strengthening collective security. As a staunch supporter of multilateral processes in disarmament affairs, Nepal urges the diversion of resources spent on armaments towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals so as to ensure a decent living for all humankind. We hope that the positive momentum generated by the first and second phases of the triennial cycle will be further consolidated in the current phase by forging consensus on substantive recommendations to eliminate nuclear weapons and promote confidence-building measures for general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Mero (United Republic of Tanzania): At the outset, allow me to express my deepest condolences

to the Government of the Russian Federation and to the relatives of those who died yesterday owing to the terrorist attack in the Saint Petersburg subway.

My delegation wishes to congratulate you, Madam Chair, and the Bureau on your well-deserved election. You have our confidence and assurance of cooperation and support.

The United Republic of Tanzania aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representatives of Indonesia and Cameroon on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, respectively (see A/CN.10/PV.362). I will make the following remarks in my national capacity.

First, Tanzania recognizes the United Nations Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. We note with concern that the Commission has not submitted any substantive recommendations to the General Assembly in the course of the previous years. Hence, we wish to underscore the need for the Commission to achieve concrete results in this third year of its three-year cycle.

Secondly, my delegation wishes to underscore the importance of achieving total, irreversible and verifiable disarmament of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction. As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Tanzania is concerned about the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, which failed to issue a final document, owing to a lack of political will among member States. In that regard, we believe that the United Nations conference should negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination as the ultimate goal. Tanzania also looks forward to a successful preparatory committee for the 2020 review conference of the parties to the NPT, which is envisaged to be convened from 2 to 12 May in Vienna.

Thirdly, my delegation underscores the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which continues to work with member States to promote the peaceful application of nuclear technology and nuclear energy in the world. Through its programme, it encourages nuclear safety and adherence to security standards. In that regard, the United Republic of Tanzania commends and supports its important role in promoting the safe and secure use of nuclear technology.

Fourthly, the United Republic of Tanzania has long been cognizant of the presence of weapons of mass destruction and of the grave threat that the presence of weapons of this nature poses to the peace and security of our nation, our continent and our world, especially if they fall into the hands of irresponsible non-State actors. Tanzania therefore calls on member States to take appropriate steps to prevent unauthorized access and hedge against terrorists from acquiring weapons of any kind in their respective countries.

Fifthly, the United Republic of Tanzania believes in the importance of the use of outer space for peaceful purposes and is deeply concerned about the implications of the arms race, such as the deployment of a ballistic-missile system and other unsafe systems in space. My delegation therefore calls on the international community to underline the importance of strict compliance and adherence with the relevant disarmament agreements and the existing legal regime concerning outer-space usage.

Sixthly, my delegation is acutely aware of the grave threat that the trafficking in conventional arms poses to peace and security in the world and specifically to the African continent. The regulation of conventional arms is of the utmost importance to prevent the proliferation of small arms, the exacerbation of violence, the displacement of people and poverty eradication. In this regard, Tanzania signed the Arms Trade Treaty on 3 June 2013 and strongly supports the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In conclusion, my delegation hopes that this substantive session will come up with recommendations on its two agenda items: first, achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and, secondly, practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

Mr. Hilale (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to express our solidarity with the Russian Federation in the face of the heinous terrorist attack that targeted the subway in Saint Petersburg. We condemn in the strongest possible terms any terrorist act, regardless of its motivation. There is no justification for terrorism or attacks or explosions targeting civilians.

Allow me to begin by expressing the sincere congratulations of the Kingdom of Morocco following your election, Madam Chair, to guide the work of

the Disarmament Commission and assure you of our full and complete cooperation. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, whose term will soon end, and to express my delegation's appreciation to him and, through him, to the whole Office for Disarmament Affairs for the commendable efforts it has made to monitor and manage disarmament issues within the United Nations.

The Moroccan delegation associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the Group of African States and the Group of Arab States (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

Last year, during the general debate of the Disarmament Commission, we heard an appeal by a number of non-nuclear States, advocating the launching of immediate negotiations on a convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, the only weapons of mass destruction that are not subject to prohibition by a legally binding instrument in spite of their catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences.

Last week, this wish was made manifest when a large majority of States decided, in an unprecedented conference, to initiate a process to prohibit nuclear weapons in a global, universal and verifiable way. The position of Morocco, as Vice-Chair of that conference, was an expression of its commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as of its strong commitment to peace and security and the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In moving towards a total and universal ban of nuclear weapons, we reiterate our conviction that all countries that wish to promote multilateralism and the defence of international law have an obligation to ensure the effective application of all the provisions contained in international treaties on disarmament and non-proliferation to build a world of peace and security for all. To this end, we believe it is our duty to do everything possible to implement the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and to ensure the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

We believe that, at the regional level, the creation of zones free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction are major objectives. The creation of a zone free of nuclear weapons in the Middle East has not yet taken place, despite the fact that this concern has been explicitly mentioned in successive decisions of the NPT review conferences. In our view, it is crucial to convene, without further delay, an international conference to establish a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, an initiative which has been continuously delayed.

Like many other States, Morocco can only deplore the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, the unique multilateral negotiating body for multilateral disarmament instruments. We all know that the obstacles to the Conference on Disarmament are of a political nature, and the lethargy it has been mired in for years contrasts with the new security challenges facing the world and the chances of general and complete disarmament. Morocco remains ready to constructively consider all initiatives aimed at giving new impetus to the United Nations disarmament mechanisms, including ending the two impasses in the Conference on Disarmament, while remaining committed to its integrity and mandate.

Within the framework of the Disarmament Commission, Morocco, which chaired the Working Group on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons, welcomes the spirit it saw during the two sessions of the triennial cycle, despite the Commission's inability to reach a consensus on substantive recommendations on its agenda items. We encourage States to show flexibility and political will to facilitate agreements in the Disarmament Commission. No approach should be ruled out from consideration, as that is the spirit of the Commission.

In April 2000, the Kingdom of Morocco ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), whose objective is to make the prohibition on nuclear tests irreversible, transparent and verifiable. The Kingdom regrets the late entry into force of the Treaty. Faced with increased nuclear threats, we are convinced that a multilateral approach, coupled with genuine Inter-State confidence, is needed more than ever to bring the countries that are reluctant to ratify the CTBT to do so and, consequently, to hasten its entry into force.

The illicit trade in conventional weapons continues to threaten African States and to fuel terrorism and organized crime. Morocco believes that regional and subregional cooperation are essential drivers in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light

weapons. The worrying situation we see in the Sahelo-Saharan region because of the connections that exist between arms-trafficking networks and terrorist groups challenges all of us to step up our efforts to strengthen regional cooperation through an inclusive approach.

My country attaches particular importance to the exchange of information and experience and to strengthening international and regional cooperation in the field of security and in the fight against the illicit trafficking in biological, radioactive and nuclear material. Morocco is an active member of the United Nations Group of Friends on Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation and Security Governance. The Kingdom participates in a number of international initiatives, such as the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and the Nuclear Security Summit process. Later this year, Morocco, in the framework of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), will organize a workshop for African focal points.

Lastly, allow me to express the hope that the Disarmament Commission, under your leadership, Madam Chair, will succeed in reaching a consensus on a programme of work in order to pave the way for the adoption of recommendations. In doing so, we could meet the expectations of the international community to eliminate nuclear weapons as quickly as possible and achieve the noble objective of a world free of this threat.

Mr. Weinoh (Nigeria): My delegation would like to join previous speakers in expressing its heartfelt condolences to the Russian Federation and the victims of yesterday's dastardly terrorist attack.

On behalf of my delegation, I would like to congratulate you, Madam, on your election as the Chair of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) at its 2017 substantive session. As you steer the course of our work, my delegation is confident that your experience will guide our deliberations during this session. We assure you of our full cooperation.

We would also like to express our appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Odo Tevi of Vanuatu, for his leadership and contributions, as well as to the previous Chairs of the two Working Groups for their dedication and hard work, and to Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his kind remarks.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made, respectively, by the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, and by the representative of Cameroon, on behalf of the Group of African States (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

Nigeria underscores the importance of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as the sole specialized and deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery. While recognizing its usefulness and potential as the competent forum for addressing issues concerning comprehensive nuclear disarmament, we wish to state that the Disarmament Commission needs to streamline and improve upon its working methods to enable it to deliver on its mandate, with particular reference to nuclear disarmament as the top priority, and to pointedly confront the challenges of non-proliferation. Without a doubt, the continued existence of nuclear weapons remains an existential threat to all humankind. The costs of maintaining and modernizing such weapons are both outrageous and inexcusable when compared to the resources allocated by States for more useful and productive ventures that will further growth, development, prosperity and other peaceful and positive articulations of human endeavours.

Several UNDC sessions have been concluded without concrete outcomes owing to a lack of political will and the inflexible positions of States. Given that this year's session marks the final lap of a three-year cycle, which began in 2015, my delegation hopes to see an outcome that provides for modest and unambiguous recommendations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Such a result will no doubt justify our persistence and convey the determination of the States Members of the United Nations for improvement in the scale and pace of nuclear disarmament, which has remained stalled for decades.

My delegation recalls the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), 47 years ago, and the convening of its ninth Review Conference, in May 2015. Despite the unacceptable outcome of the most recent NPT Review Conference regarding the implementation of the Treaty's disarmament obligations, the NPT, alongside other nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation measures, has remained partly successful in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. My delegation stresses that its universalization is dependent upon strict compliance with its three pillars of disarmament, non-proliferation

and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. As we prepare for the next Review Conference, in 2020, beginning with the first session of the Preparatory Committee in May this year, my delegation hopes that the efforts of Member States will be geared towards strengthening the NPT by truly reinforcing its three pillars.

Nuclear weapons are, by definition, instruments whose sole objective its mass destruction. It has repeatedly been demonstrated that they are inhumane and intolerable weapons that should be taken off the list of global armaments as responsible and respected partners in human development projects. Curiously, they remain the only weapons of mass destruction yet to be prohibited. My delegation seizes this opportunity to again highlight the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (A/51/218, annex), which affirms that the threat or use of nuclear weapons constitutes a crime against humanity and a violation of international law, including international humanitarian law.

My delegation emphasizes the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result from either a deliberate or unintentional explosion of nuclear weapons. That should serve as a compelling reason for some States to end their unnecessary denial of the existential threat faced by the human race and should highlight the urgent need to address the question of the continued possession of nuclear weapons. In that context, Nigeria welcomed the General Assembly's adoption last year of resolution 71/258 by an overwhelming majority of States, as well as the successful convening of the first session of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons leading to their total elimination. The reports on the active participation by States and civil-society groups during the the conference pointed to the fact that nuclear weapons are unwelcome in any form. As negotiations are set to begin in the June/July session, my delegation calls on all States, including nuclear-weapon States and all those under their shield, to be part of the epoch-making process, so that the world can collectively achieve the goal of nuclear disarmament and ensure a nuclear-weapon-free world.

As a party to the Treaty of Pelindaba, Nigeria welcomes the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in other parts the world. The Treaty serves as a shield for the continent of Africa, including by preventing the stationing of nuclear explosive devices on the continent and prohibiting the testing of nuclear weapons. As a measure to ensure a world free from the fear or possibility of the use of nuclear weapons, my delegation further calls on all Member States to support efforts to replicate that measure in the remaining parts of the world, including in the Middle East.

As they did during the 2016 session, our deliberations will focus on recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. My delegation considers it to be a fair and useful attempt at enriching our deliberations on all layers of disarmament. While the role of the UNDC in developing that concept is well noted, the Commission should take it a step further by translating those agreed elements into reality.

In the field of conventional weapons, Nigeria has continually highlighted the measures that have been taken in recent times to address the proliferation of conventional weapons, particularly the illicit acquisition and use of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. A number of States in Africa are suffering from the illicit trade in such weapons. We therefore recognize the necessity and importance of engaging all States to significantly contribute to national and regional efforts to address the menace of illicit small arms and light weapons, including by significantly adhering to the elements of international cooperation and assistance. We hope that this session will highlight the importance of upholding our commitments in the course of our deliberations.

Nigeria remains committed to the principle and objectives of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) and continues to urge its universalization. We call upon on all States to ensure its effective implementation as the first legally binding global instrument to regulate the trade in conventional arms. Indeed, the ATT has the potential to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms, through the prevention of their diversion for unauthorized end use and to unauthorized end users and non-State actors. In principle, it could reduce human suffering as well as contribute to international and regional peace, security and stability. As we proceed with our work during this session and as a confidence-building measure, my delegation looks forward to the working group dedicated to discussing the provisions of this landmark Treaty to highlight the need for the continued elaboration of the usefulness of

the ATT for my country, my region, the entire continent of Africa and the world at large.

Finally, Nigeria wishes to highlight the efforts of the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in terms of their contribution to disarmament measures and other future challenges. My delegation notes the valuable input of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, particularly in its efforts to ensure the provision of a robust programme on capacity-building and in extending technical assistance to many States and to the continent of Africa. My delegation promises to work resolutely towards fulfilling the mandate of the UNDC, as highlighted at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. We remain hopeful that member States will be flexible as they begin negotiations in the coming days.

Mrs. García Guiza (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, on behalf of my delegation, allow me to extend condolences to the Russian Federation following the tragic events that occurred on the Saint Petersburg subway system yesterday.

My delegation welcomes the fact that a country from the Latin American and Caribbean region that is committed to disarmament has assumed the chairmanship of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. Rest assured, Madam Chair, of Mexico's full support as you carry out your duties.

Mexico aligns itself with the statement made by the delegation of El Salvador on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

Mexico remains committed to the issue of nuclear disarmament, which was the subject of resolution 1(1) — the first General Assembly resolution, adopted 71 years ago — and is still on the Organization's agenda. In line with that commitment, Mexico co-sponsored 10 resolutions that were adopted last year by the General Assembly. Four of those resolutions have led to a positive shift in the tone, dynamics and focus with which the issue of nuclear weapons is addressed here at the United Nations. Resolution 71/258 issued the mandate for the holding of the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons leading to their total elimination, which began its work last week.

My delegation welcomes the overwhelming commitment of a large part of the membership of the Organization to participate actively in the first session of that conference. We hope that the momentum generated by the conference will serve to renew interest so that the disarmament machinery can fulfil the mandate conferred on it by the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and give new impetus to the Disarmament Commission, allowing it to agree on substantive recommendations, a function that it has not been able to carry out for more than a decade.

For Mexico, the situation concerning the disarmament machinery is unacceptable because it prevents the United Nations from reaching its potential. The disarmament machinery was established as a means and a tool to achieve one objective: international peace and security through disarmament. We must not lose sight of the organic relationship that exists between disarmament and peace. Mexico does not subscribe to the view that weapons provide the foundation for peace.

Throughout history, the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean have stood out because of their call for nuclear disarmament, which is a task upon which we began to build 50 years ago with the opening for signature of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The Treaty of Tlatelolco was a watershed in the nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation processes and an inspiration for the establishment of other nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world for the benefit of their populations and regional stability.

Mexico believes that the United Nations must analyse the complexities related to conventional weapons by taking a comprehensive approach that compasses the multiplicity of instruments and the challenges, in particular the illicit trafficking in such weapons, so as to determine the appropriate strategy to counter the diversion of conventional weapons during the coming years and contribute to achieving target 4 of Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mexico welcomes the progress that has been made in the institutional and procedural force of the Arms Trade Treaty. We call on States parties to implement the Treaty at the national and regional levels and to promote its universality. Furthermore, my country

welcomes the fact that the sixth Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held last year, agreed on a decisive outcome document that, among other positive aspects, recognizes that effectively controlling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons contributes to sustainable development, the elimination of armed violence and the promotion of international peace and security. Moreover, to that same end, we hope that we can continue to strengthen the regimes established by the respective conventions against conventional weapons of indiscriminate effect, anti-personnel land mines and cluster munitions. We cannot achieve sustainable peace if weapons of indiscriminate effect continue to be allowed to hinder development and the sustainability of societies.

Mexico has maintained that multilateral forums must encourage, not inhibit, discussions and decision-making processes. We hope that the work of the Disarmament Commission at this session will unleash the potential of this deliberative forum by making recommendations that will bring us closer to a more peaceful and secure world.

Mr. Ry Tuy (Cambodia): First of all, I would like to express our heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the Russian Federation, the bereaved families and the victims of the terrorist attacks in Saint Petersburg. Cambodia stands firmly and in solidarity with the Russian Federation against global terror.

Allow me to express my congratulations to you, Madam Chair, on assuming the chairmanship of the 2017 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). My delegation believes that, under your able guidance, we will proactively move forward towards fulfilling the mandate of the Commission.

I align myself with the statement made yesterday by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

The negotiations conducted through the United Nations multilateral machinery remain important in addressing disarmament matters. Three main bodies need to be given momentum — the Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament and the General Assembly. The UNDC is a deliberative body within the United Nations multilateral machinery that allows for in-depth discussions on the specific issues relating to disarmament, leading to the submission of concrete recommendations to the General Assembly. Regrettably, during the past decades, we have been unable to submit such recommendations and, therefore, unable to fulfil the mandate of the Disarmament Commission. It is our collective responsibility to overcome the impasse that has plagued the UNDC since the turn of the century. At this point, in order to achieve such a result, all States Members of the United Nations should show the political will needed to reach an agreement on recommendations. We encourage all Member States to exhibit increased political will, flexibility and cooperation during the new cycle.

For its part, Cambodia reaffirms its principled position on nuclear disarmament and emphasizes that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their use or threat of use. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all their aspects are essential to strengthening international peace and security and promoting the rule of law at the national and international levels. We emphasize the importance of the principles of transparency, irreversibility and international verifiability in the fulfilment by the nuclear-weapon States of their nuclear-disarmament obligations. Moreover, in view of the central role of the United Nations as a universal multilateral framework for the consideration of disarmament issues, non-proliferation agreements should be addressed through inclusive, open and non-discriminatory processes, and should not impose restrictions on access to the nuclear technology, materials and equipment for peaceful purposes required by developing countries.

While the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of any effort to address nuclear weapons, we must undertake genuine consultations at the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization that will lead to fruitful outcomes for the forthcoming 2020 Review Conference. My country continues to uphold the purposes and principles of the Treaty. Our commitment towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons must be resolute. Our ultimate goal is a world without nuclear weapons. I therefore believe that the negotiations, which took place in the General Assembly last week, aimed at forging an instrument prohibiting nuclear weapons and leading to their total elimination, should be of value for us. Given the concerns about the threats to peace and security that nuclear and missile

tests pose, it is imperative that we work to strengthen the relevant international instruments, including the NPT, and to put the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty into force.

As a State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Cambodia attaches great importance to the universal validity of this multilateral instrument that bans the development, production, stockpiling, use or transfer of chemical weapons and enhances collective security through the verified elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, the establishment of a national authority in our country is a clear indication of Cambodia's willingness to work cooperatively to strengthen the global chemical-weapons ban. All we need is for the relevant authorities working in this field to build their capacity.

Once again, I would like to underscore the need for everyone to fully support the United Nations Disarmament Commission so that it can effectively implement its mandate.

Mr. Noori (Afghanistan): At the outset, I would like to express our deepest condolences to the delegation of the Russian Federation in connection with the victims of the terrorist attack that occurred yesterday in Saint Petersburg.

Allow me to congratulate you, Madam, on your election as the Chair of the Commission. I would also like to congratulate the members of the Bureau on their elections. My delegation is fully committed to the successful fulfilment of the work of the Commission and assures you, Madam, of its full cooperation.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries. We also thank Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for his statement (see A/CN.10/PV.362).

My delegation believes in and reiterates its commitment to multilateral diplomacy as a crucial principle for advancing the global disarmament agenda. To achieve the goals of arms control, reduction, disarmament and the total elimination of all types of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, there is an urgent need for all States Members of the United Nations to demonstrate political will in that regard. My delegation has expressed this long-standing position time and again and would like once again to reiterate it today. As a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, Afghanistan strongly supports all initiatives in the sphere of nuclear disarmament.

Afghanistan is extremely disturbed by the humanitarian threat posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use, intentionally or accidentally. It is for that reason that we welcomed the outcome of the third and final Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which recognized the total elimination of all nuclear weapons as the only definite safeguard against a catastrophic nuclear explosion. We therefore remain cognizant of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, particularly after the human catastrophe that resulted from the nuclear attacks on Nagasaki and Hiroshima. In that context, my delegation has supported the Austrian Pledge announced at the third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons.

Afghanistan strongly urges all States to fulfil their international obligations by signing, ratifying and actively supporting all efforts to promote the goals of all multilateral treaties relating to disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. In that context, my delegation also condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the nuclear and ballistic-missile tests conducted by North Korea. At the same time, we fully support the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, subject to the verification mechanisms of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

My delegation notes with concern that, despite some positive developments in international diplomacy's efforts to achieve the disarmament of nuclear weapons, we still face threats to human security and sustainability of an unprecedented nature. The global and regional climate of terrorism and violent extremism has made the call for nuclear disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction more urgent than ever. Afghanistan has also joined the Group of Friends of Resolution 1540 (2004) and the Group of Friends of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Weapon Risk Mitigation and Security Governance.

Nuclear terrorism remains a matter of serious concern, particularly when nuclear weapons can fall into the hands of terrorists or irresponsible individuals

or groups. We need to identify the areas where individuals or a group are engaged in potential nuclear terrorism activities. In that regard, there is also a need for regulations and capacity-building so that States can identify and prevent such activities.

My delegation remains concerned about the mass illicit trafficking in arms, mainly of small and light weapons, which for decades has enabled terrorists and violent extremists to cause the Afghan people tremendous suffering. It must end. Furthermore, the presence of improvised explosive devices, explosive remnants of war and landmines poses a severe threat to the lives of thousands of people globally and impedes development activities.

My delegation is gravely concerned about the continued use of improvised explosive devices around the globe. Improvised explosive devices are responsible for thousands of civilian casualties every day. They have become the primary weapon for non-State armed groups in many conflicts. Their impact on the security and stability of States is profound, as they not only damage the political, social and economic development of a country but also prevent the ability of necessary humanitarian aid to reach affected areas. Due to the lack of a comprehensive, systematic approach to counter the use of improvised explosive devices, which are relatively simple in their manufacture, acquisition and transfer, my delegation submitted a draft resolution last year that was subsequently adopted by consensus (resolution 71/72).

Pursuant to resolution 71/72, my delegation held informal consultations on 29 March with Member States, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the United Nations Mine Action Service, the World Customs Organization, INTERPOL, the Mines Advisory Group and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research. I would also like to avail myself of this opportunity to thank UNODA for establishing, pursuant to resolution 71/72, an online hub to provide impartial, authoritative information relevant to addressing the issue of improvised explosive devices. My delegation will further arrange informal consultations on the follow-up to the resolution and will keep the Member States informed on developments.

The Chair: We have exhausted the list of speakers for the general debate. I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. In that regard, I would like to remind delegations that the number of the interventions in exercise of the right of reply for any delegation on any item at a given meeting is limited to two. The first intervention should be limited to 10 minutes and the second intervention to five minutes.

Mr. Mazzeo (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation has requested the floor in right of reply in response to the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom.

Argentina wishes to reiterate the particular situation with regard to the Argentine territory of the Malvinas Islands, in accordance with the interpretative declaration made on 14 December 1999 by the Republic of Argentina at the time of its ratification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. To date, that declaration has not been amended and remains the main basis for Argentina's extension. The only part of Argentine territory that is affected by anti-personnel mines is the Malvinas. However, Argentina has been prevented from accessing those mines in order to carry out its obligations under the Convention, since that territory, together with the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, has been illegitimately occupied by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and is the subject of a sovereignty dispute. The General Assembly has recognized the existence of a sovereignty dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland pertaining to the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas and has urged both Governments to resume negotiations in order to find a peaceful and definitive solution as soon as possible.

The General Assembly has mandated a good-offices mission to be carried out by the Secretary-General to help both parties to fulfil that mandate, which should inform the Assembly on the progress being made. Similarly, the Special Committee on Decolonization adopts an annual draft resolution that states that this special and particular colonial situation must be put to an end through a peaceful and negotiated settlement, and it asks both Governments to resume their negotiations to that end. The Committee adopted its most recent such draft resolution on 23 June 2016.

Despite the repeated statements by the United Nations and other regional and international forums,

the United Kingdom continues to reject renewing such negotiations. With regard to its request for an extension on 1 October 2009, Argentina submitted a schematic framework to implement article 5 of the Ottawa Convention in the contested areas during the 10 years of the extension, if the negotiations with regard to sovereignty by the Republic of Argentina and the United Kingdom were to be renewed and, in that context, both countries were to reach an agreement on the clearance of anti-personnel mines, including unexploded ordnance.

The Republic of Argentina reaffirms its rights of sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, which are an integral part of its national territory.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The position of the Syrian Arab Republic entails well-known principles. We condemn the use of chemical weapons and all other categories of weapons of mass destruction. In our view, the use of chemical weapons is intolerable, immoral and unacceptable. For that reason, my country is party to the Chemical Weapons Convention and supports the initiative to create a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Ironically, our efforts have been opposed by a number of countries, including France, that seek to protect Israel's chemical, biological and nuclear arsenal. France's statement therefore did not surprise us, because we did not expect that delegation to respect or defend international law, but rather its own strategic interests.

The representative of France is not in a position to make accusations. I would remind him that his country is historically responsible for the Israeli nuclear danger and bears more responsibility than any other State, since France was the first country to provide a nuclear reactor to Israel, which it did in the 1950s at a time when the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons did not yet exist. We would hope that the statement of the French delegation, as well as that of other delegations, would denounce crimes that threatened the future of the peoples of the region, as well as international peace and security.

At the beginning of the 1960s, France conducted nuclear tests in Western Sahara using human victims. Indeed, France tied Algerians to pillars that were set up at precise distances from the centre of the explosion. The pretext for doing so was to determine and study the effects of nuclear weapons on living Algerian victims. This is just one example of the crimes that have been perpetrated by France. These are not crimes that should be perpetrated by people who defend or claim to defend international law.

We heard the representative of France say that his country respects non-proliferation. The reality, however, is somewhat different. By way of example, during the past few years, France has welcomed Israeli nuclear-weapons experts and has allowed them to update and develop their own nuclear weapons. I invite the representative of France to read the book by Georges Malbrunot and Christian Chesnot in which the involvement of Laurent Fabius in using chemical weapons, in Damascus in August 2013, is confirmed. France continues to provide information and weapons, including toxic weapons, to terrorist groups in Syria.

Mr. Kim In Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to exercise its right of reply with regard to the remarks made by the representatives of Japan, the United Kingdom, France and other countries, who stated that the self-defence measures of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea were a provocation and a threat to the region and world peace. My delegation totally rejects those remarks as ridiculous assertions and distortions of reality.

I do not feel any need to repeat the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's principled stance of bolstering its self-defence measures in that regard, but I would like to draw the special attention of the Commission to Japan's remarks.

Japan has neither the qualifications nor the honour to criticize the nuclear and ballistic-missile launch tests of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Japan actively takes part in the hostile policies and nuclear threats of the United States, as well as the blackmailing of my country, under the cloak of Japan's deceptive Three Non-Nuclear Principles. Japan has systematically increased military spending under the pretext of acquiring military muscle commensurate with its economic potential, and has become the country with the highest growth rate in military spending. At the end of last year, the Japanese daily *Mainichi Shimbun* reported that the Japanese Government had decided to allot ¥5.1 trillion to military spending for the 2017 fiscal year.

The current Japanese authorities' ambitions to become an emerging military giant and to launch overseas operations have reached a climax. With a scale of military hardware for self-defence forces as large as that of other global military Powers, Japan is capable of manufacturing nuclear weapons any time it chooses and even has the means for their delivery in place. The operational sphere of the self-defence forces has no geographical limit. According to the revised guidelines for Japan-United States defence cooperation, it has been expanded worldwide.

The self-defence forces have turned into an entirely offensive armed-forces operation, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is the primary target. The only reason that Japan continues to provoke us regarding nuclear and ballistic-missile launch tests is to be deceptive — in order to build its military power as an expression of its emerging militarism and aggressive ambitions in Asia. Japan should sincerely apologize for its crime against humanity and its potential crime of becoming a military Power with nuclear ambitions, in the first place.

Ms. Bebbington (United Kingdom): I would like to exercise our right of reply with regard to the statement made by the representative of Argentina.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has no doubt about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. The principle and the right of self-determination, as set out in Article 1.2 of the Charter of the United Nations and article 1 of the International Covenant On Civil and Political Rights, underlies our position. The United Kingdom is clear that the future of the Falkland Islands should be determined by the people of the Falkland islands, in accordance with our obligations under the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Amiya (Japan): I take the floor in exercise of our right of reply in response to the intervention made by the representative of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

We do not need to repeat the position that Japan has taken as a peaceful nation. The claims made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea regarding Japan's self-defence measures are ungrounded.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear-missile development is a clear violation of a series of Security Council resolutions determining that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should abandon all nuclear-weapon and ballistic-missile programmes, refrain from any further provocations and fully comply with the relevant Council resolutions and the 2005 Joint Statement of the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks.

Mr. Mazzeo (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I must take the floor again to respond to some of the comments made by the representative of the United Kingdom in her right of reply.

The delegation of Argentina wholly reaffirms the statements made by its President before the General Assembly on 20 September 2016 (see A/71/PV.8) and by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship before the Special Committee on Decolonization on 23 June 2016. Argentina reiterates that the principle of the self-determination of nations is entirely and manifestly inapplicable to the dispute between the two countries regarding the sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. Unlike other cases of colonization in which a pre-existing nation is victim of the establishment of colonial domination, none of the resolutions about the question of the Malvinas refer to the principle of self-determination. Moreover, in 1985 the General Assembly rejected two separate amendments that sought to introduce a reference to the principle of self-determination in the resolution on the Malvinas Islands.

Argentina notes that the interests of the residents of those islands and their way of life are adequately addressed by the relevant General Assembly resolutions and by the Constitution of the Republic of Argentina. My country reaffirms its legitimate sovereignty rights over the Malvinas Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas, which are an integral part of Argentine national territory.

Mr. Kim In Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): The Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to exercise its right of reply to address the remarks of the Japanese representative with regard to his characterization of Japan as a peaceful nation.

Let me offer an example. Japan launched an H-IIA rocket carrying a spy satellite from the Tanegashima Space Centre, located in Japan's Kagoshima prefecture, on 17 March. Japanese authorities announced that the satellite was aimed at gathering intelligence on the

ballistic-missile launches of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — itself revealing that it is indeed a spy satellite. The satellite launch conducted by Japan at a time of heightened militarization is yet another chilling testament to its premeditated policy of militarization, and a clear revelation of its ambition to return to Korea.

Its United States ally can develop any missile or launch any spy satellite without a problem, but a country hostile to the United States is not allowed to exercise its right to launch legitimate peaceful satellites — a right recognized by international law. Nothing can justify that faulty logic.

That is why the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has proposed that the legal grounds for the Council sanctions resolutions be clarified through a forum of international legal experts convened for that purpose.

I would like to emphasize once again that we will continue to exercise our legitimate right to develop our self-defence measures, enriching our people with nuclear capabilities, no matter what others may say, and taking shrewd measures to cope with Japan's militarization and its move to realize the ambition of invading us once again.

Ms. Bebbington (United Kingdom): The United Nations has not said that the right to self-determination does not apply to the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands and the surrounding maritime areas. In 2003, Argentina attempted to qualify the right of self-determination in cases where there was a territorial dispute, but it was not accepted by the General Assembly Fourth Committee, which reaffirmed that the right to self-determination was a universal right.

Nor has the United Nations said that territorial integrity is more important than self-determination. In 2010, then-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said that

> "[t]he world's 16 remaining territories that still do not govern themselves must have complete freedom in deciding their future status. It is essential for the people concerned to understand the options regarding their political status and to be able to exercise their right to freely choose their future."

In March 2013, the Falkland Islands referendum reaffirmed the islanders' overwhelming wish to maintain their political status as an overseas territory of the United Kingdom, with 99.8 per cent voting in favour. We shall always defend the right of the Falkland Islands to determine their own political future.

Mr. Amiya (Japan): I would like to reply to the remarks made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Once again, the allegations about Japan's militarization are totally ungrounded. Japan's activities in the field of space development are fully in compliance with the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies and other relevant international agreements, and are strictly for peaceful uses, based on the principles of pacifism enshrined in our Constitution.

It is highly inappropriate to compare Japan with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as the latter has repeatedly conducted missile launches in clear violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, which prohibit any launches by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea that use ballistic-missile technology. Japan urges the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the 2005 Joint Statement of the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.